

PHYSIOTHERAPY

By Simon Burley Physiotherapist

Simon Burley, a leading Sunshine Coast Physiotherapist from the Maroochydore Physiotherapy Centre says certain abnormal walking problems are often overlooked or disregarded as "cute" when they can be a real problem. Jason Taylor from Buderim Physiotherapy agrees.

At the age of about seven, children begin to develop their adult gait (walking pattern). Often unusual patterns of movement (walking or running) are ignored by parents. It is essential for a child's self esteem, their ability to participate in sport to their full potential and to prevent injuries that mum and dad encourage normal patterns. Patterns engrained when young are more difficult to correct when an adult.

Unusual movements to look for are:

- i) The feet or knees turning in excessively
- ii) Walking on the outsides of feet
- iii) Feet flattening out excessively
- iv) Throwing the foot out to the side as they step through,
- v) Unusual or lack of arm swing is a sign of incorrect leg movement.

A simple test to try is:

Hands on hip, stand on one leg and bend that knee. Problems are indicated if you can't balance at all, the feet roll in and flatten excessively, or the knee rolls inwards well past the line of the big toe.

Your Physiotherapist can assess your walking and running to determine what is required. Sometimes identification of a problem and some simple verbal correction is all that's required. Other times easy walking / running drills are encouraged along with strengthening and stretching exercises. Often footwear type needs correction.

Occasionally orthotics may be required to control abnormal foot posture.